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Advancement of women

Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/144 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, the present report provides information on measures taken by Member States and activities undertaken within the United Nations system to address violence against women. The report draws conclusions and proposes specific recommendations for future action.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 67/144 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, the General Assembly urged Member States to continue to adopt a more systematic, comprehensive, multisectoral and sustained approach, aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women, in the fields of legislation, policies, prevention, law enforcement, victim assistance and rehabilitation, data collection and analysis. It further urged States to increase their focus on protection and the provision of services. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, at its sixty-ninth session, a report with information provided by States and the United Nations bodies, funds and programmes and the specialized agencies on their follow-up activities, including on the assistance of the United Nations entities to States, to implement the resolution. The present report is submitted in accordance with that request. It is based on information received from Member States and entities of the United Nations and covers the period since the previous report (A/67/220) up to 16 June 2014.

II. Background

2. Recent global estimates show that 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.[1] Most recent regional studies show similar findings.[2] Another regional study on male behaviour demonstrates that the perpetration of rape was pervasive, but varied across countries, while it started early in life with no legal consequences for the majority of the perpetrators.[3] The most common form of violence experienced by women is intimate partner violence, which often leads to injuries and at times to death. As confirmed in a global study on homicide, almost half of female homicide victims are killed by their family members or intimate partners, whereas the figure for men is just over 1 in 20 homicide victims.[4] The current economic crises have exacerbated vulnerability and economic disadvantage for women (see A/HRC/26/39), resulted in cutbacks in social spending on health and education and rendered women more vulnerable to exploitation and violence.[5]

III. Global legal and policy developments

3. United Nations intergovernmental and expert bodies continued to address violence against women. Notably, the Commission on the Status of Women which, at its fifty-seventh session in 2013, adopted agreed conclusions on the topic,

[1] World Health Organization, "Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence" (Geneva, 2013).

[2] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Violence against Women: An EU-Wide Survey* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014).

[3] Partners for Prevention, *Why Do Some Men Use Violence Against Women and How Can We Prevent It? Summary Report of Quantitative Findings from the United Nations Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific* (Bangkok, 2013).

[4] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Global study on homicide" (Vienna, 2013).

[5] Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), "Impact of the global economic crisis on women, rights and gender equality", discussion paper (Geneva, 2012).

highlighting emerging issues, such as the role of information, communication and technology and social media, as well as particular groups of women and forms of violence, such as gender-related killings/femicide. The latter was also addressed for the first time by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/191. The role of the health system in addressing violence, in particular against women and girls, was addressed by the World Health Assembly during its sixty-seventh session (2014). Violence against women in particular situations, such as conflict and post-conflict, was addressed in general recommendation No. 30, as recently adopted by the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in 2013.

4. Internationally agreed measurements about the scope and prevalence of violence against women are essential as this allows global comparison and monitoring of trends over time. To this end, the United Nations Statistical Commission, at its forty-fourth session in 2013, endorsed a set of nine core indicators for surveys on violence against women (E/2013/24-E/CN.3/2013/33). The Commission also endorsed the Guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women: statistical surveys, as developed by the Statistics Division of the Secretariat, to assist countries in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of such violence.

5. The Human Rights Council, in its resolutions 23/25 and 24/23, also continued to address violence against women, including its particular forms, such as rape and sexual violence and child, early and forced marriages, as well as remedies for women who have been subjected to violence. Its Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, during its fourteenth to eighteenth sessions, from December 2012 to June 2014, continued to make recommendations relating to violence against women in 70 countries it considered. It specifically recommended that States should ensure effective implementation of laws and policies through adequate allocation of resources and strengthen their efforts in the areas of data collection and analysis, prevention, services provision and prosecution.

6. The special procedures of the Human Rights Council, including the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice and its Special Rapporteurs have continuously addressed the issue, including in the context of country visits (see for example, A/HRC/22/53/Add.5 and A/HRC/25/60/Add.1). In its reports, the Working Group addressed violence as a cross-cutting theme, including as an obstacle to women's equal opportunity and the achievement of their economic, social potential, and their participation in public and political life; and the impact of school-related gender-based violence on access of girls to education (see A/HRC/26/39 and A/HRC/23/50). The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences examined the topic of State responsibility, and the use of the standard of due diligence, in eliminating such violence (see A/HRC/23/49).

IV. Measures reported by Member States and United Nations entities

7. As at 16 June 2014, 32 Member States[6] and 19 United Nations entities[7] had responded to the Secretary-General's request for information relating to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/144. Information was provided on a range of measures taken to address violence against women, which are set out below.

A. International instruments, legislation and the justice system

1. International and regional instruments

8. The international legal framework obligates and guides States in the revision, adoption and implementation of their laws to address violence against women. Member States drew attention to their adherence to a range of international instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto. Many States indicated their progress made towards full adherence to relevant regional instruments, such as the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. A few States also referred to the resolutions of the Security Council on women, peace and security.

2. Legislation, justice system and measures to end impunity

Enactment and amendment of laws

9. Violence against women is rooted in structural inequality between men and women. Legal frameworks to secure gender equality and protect and promote women's human rights are necessary to effectively address such violence. In order to achieve this, States have enhanced legal frameworks to promote gender equality by incorporating relevant provisions in their constitutions (Paraguay, Qatar and

[6] Albania, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Congo, Cyprus, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mexico, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Togo and Ukraine.

[7] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

Congo), and enacting gender equality laws (Albania and Republic of Moldova), or promoting the enjoyment of women's rights to education and decision-making (Cameroon).

10. Legislation provides the foundation for a holistic approach to addressing violence against women and is a prerequisite for eliminating impunity. A comprehensive legal framework which not only criminalizes violence against women but also provides for preventative measures and support for victims and survivors is crucial, as a good practice. Such laws were adopted, for example, in Argentina and Spain. Other States have enhanced their legal frameworks by introducing provisions in their Constitutions to ensure that women are free from violence (Egypt and Paraguay), or by adopting laws which further support victims and survivors by providing, for example, compensation for damages (Estonia).

11. A number of States have adopted or revised legislation to address specific forms of violence against women, such as domestic violence (Albania, Cyprus, Paraguay and Ukraine), sexual harassment (Cameroon, Congo and Republic of Moldova), and femicide (Argentina and Mexico). States have also incorporated provisions related to the protection of women from violence in laws covering broader issues such as gender equality (Finland, Japan and Poland).

12. Member States have enacted and/or amended their penal codes and/or other laws to criminalize acts of violence against women, to increase fines and penalties, and to expand the definitions of violence and the scope of protection. For example, in several States, sentences and fines have been increased (Kyrgyzstan and Paraguay), and aggravating circumstances have been introduced, such as, the victim's age (Germany and Kuwait), and the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (Estonia and Madagascar).

13. Several States broadened the scope of protection from violence. For example, domestic violence is extended to cover violence committed within relationships, other than marriage (Japan). The definition of rape has been broadened to further comply with international human rights standards, by either including lack of victim's consent, instead of physical resistance, as a requirement (Philippines), or by expanding it to include rape committed within the marriage (Albania and Cameroon). In other States, clauses that exempt prosecution of the offenders are revoked, including forgiveness in marital rape (Philippines), or the subsequent marriage of the victim to the perpetrator (Cameroon). Jurisdiction has been further expanded to cover acts of violence against women and girls, even if committed outside the country (Germany), or regardless the nationality of offenders (Switzerland).

14. United Nations entities have also supported States to adopt or improve laws which address violence against women and girls. For instance, ECLAC, ESCWA, ILO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA and UN-Women supported national efforts for the development, revision and implementation of laws to address such violence, or one of its forms, in over 50 countries, in the past two years. They provided technical support, contributed to national consultative processes on reform and adoption of legislation, and strengthened information-sharing through the establishment of databases on existing laws in particular regions, as for example, in the Arab region (ESCWA).

Civil protection orders

15. Civil protection orders, which provide for the imposition of restrictions upon the behaviour of perpetrators, or their removal from a joint place of residence in cases of domestic violence, can prove effective for victims of violence. They are available in an increasing number of States (Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico and Paraguay), and can be mutually recognized in all territories of the country (Australia), while their violation may constitute a criminal offence (Singapore and Slovenia). Some States, including Japan, has extended their application to other forms as well, such as stalking, and Mexico strengthened their uniform registration throughout the country. In some States, though, their uniform application remains a challenge, as reported by Estonia.

Reporting and access to justice

16. Underreporting by women subjected to violence continues to be a challenge. It may be attributed to a variety of reasons, including limited information about victims'/survivors' rights, the high economic cost and complexity of criminal processes, social stigma, as well as lack of confidence in the authorities, as was stressed by the Congo, Mexico, Paraguay and Qatar. In order to address these challenges, States increased the number of female police officers (Azerbaijan, Egypt and Japan), established anonymous reporting systems (Cyprus) and stepped up efforts to inform victims and survivors of their rights and available services, including through helplines, websites and publications, often translated into several languages (Estonia, Finland, Japan, Latvia, Paraguay, Qatar and Spain). In other countries, the criminal proceedings are initiated by the authorities (Poland) and the reporting of violence by professionals who encounter cases of violence is mandatory (Cyprus, Finland and Paraguay). The appropriate enforcement of legislation addressing violence against women can be also critical in increasing reporting, as was stressed by the Philippines.

17. Criminal processes are complex and costly, a fact which may deter women from reporting their cases and further pursuing them in the criminal justice system. In order to address this challenge, States have adopted measures, and/or amended criminal procedures codes or related laws, to make legal proceedings more gender-sensitive and assist victims and survivors throughout the process. Such measures included the provision of free legal assistance, counselling, and accompanying victims and survivors to court proceedings, as a practice which may often prove effective in reducing attrition rates (Albania, Argentina, Cameroon, Congo, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mexico and Singapore). Some States expanded the procedural rights of victims and survivors (Germany) and provided availability of in-camera testimony at courts to avoid confrontation with perpetrators (Singapore).

18. United Nations entities, including OHCHR, UNDP, UNODC, UNRWA, and UN-Women also supported similar initiatives, including the provision of legal assistance; establishment of mobile courts; and awareness-raising about procedures and survivors' rights. In order to respond to the persisting challenges of women's access to justice, OHCHR, UNDP and UN-Women have developed a global programme, to be implemented in 15 countries, focusing on the reform of gender discriminatory laws and judicial systems, also in the area of violence against women.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of laws

19. Specialized training of law enforcement officials and the judiciary as well as the availability of specialized police units, prosecutors and courts for cases of violence against women can provide a safe environment for victims and survivors and improve efficiency and case outcomes. To this end, States appointed specialized judges (Paraguay), established specialized courts or units within courts (Argentina, Paraguay and Spain), and appointed dedicated staff within police units (Germany). Training programmes and the development of relevant material to enhance the gender-sensitivity of police, prosecutors, judges and security forces were carried out in the majority of the countries. In some States, specialized courses and curricula, including on human rights, children's rights, international standards and national legislation addressing violence against women, are provided in law schools and police academies (Argentina, Lithuania, Mexico and Togo). In order to introduce appropriate and clear standards for the implementation of laws, guidelines (Finland) and protocols on investigation procedures were developed (Argentina).

20. United Nations entities and funds, including ESCWA, OHCHR, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, UNDP, UNODC and UN-Women also supported similar training and capacity-building programmes, and developed guidance tools in more than 25 countries. Such initiatives were often carried out in cooperation with civil society, including women's organizations, and included a focus on investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, protection of victims and witnesses, human rights, national legislation and international standards. In order to further enhance the investigation and prosecution procedures in cases of femicide in Latin America, OHCHR and UN-Women developed a protocol model of investigation providing guidelines for the relevant authorities.

21. A few States have evaluated laws and judicial procedures (Australia) and reviewed their implementation in order to identify gaps and challenges (Cyprus and Mexico), although, little information was reported on the impact of enacted legislation. Despite progress made, enforcement of legislation, discriminatory attitudes of law enforcement officials and impunity still remain as challenges, as reported by Albania and Congo. Human rights treaty bodies, while welcoming the adoption of laws to address violence against women in their concluding observations to States parties, have also expressed concern about the ineffective enforcement of legislation, also the result of insufficient allocation of resources, as well as barriers that victims and survivors encounter to access justice.

B. National action plans, strategies and national coordination mechanisms and collaboration

22. National action plans and strategies on violence against women provide a comprehensive framework, when they cover prevention, public awareness and education, support services, data collection and analysis, and they include specific timelines and targets for implementation of activities, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. States have increasingly adopted dedicated policies on violence against women, often in consultation with women's rights organizations and United Nations entities. A few plans are comprehensive (Finland), while the majority may include measures aimed at supporting victims and survivors; awareness-raising and education; training and capacity-building efforts; and

research and data collection. Some States included in their policies the available budget for implementation (Albania) and measures on the regular evaluation of their impact (Australia). Such plans and strategies address violence against women in general (Australia, Estonia, Finland, Greece and Paraguay), or a particular form of violence, such as domestic violence (Cyprus, Latvia, Poland and Slovenia), and female genital mutilation/cutting (Finland). Some plans place a special focus on particular areas of intervention such as prevention (Australia and Azerbaijan), and on the needs of particular groups of women, which may face increased risk of violence (Finland).

23. The allocation of adequate resources and regular monitoring and evaluation are vital for the effective implementation of plans and strategies and to this end, several States reported on the allocation of resources (Albania, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Paraguay and Republic of Moldova), and other good practices, including the establishment of special mechanisms to carry out monitoring and evaluation (Cyprus). A few countries conducted evaluation of national action plans (Cyprus and Finland), while others stepped up efforts to evaluate the impact of programmes and interventions, in general (Australia).

24. Violence against women is a complex phenomenon and is often interrelated to broader issues in a society. Acknowledging this, some States incorporated targets and activities related to ending violence against women in national action plans and policies covering broader issues such as development (Madagascar, Mexico and Paraguay), gender equality (Cyprus, Japan, Paraguay and Poland), poverty reduction (Finland), as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights (Finland and Paraguay). Other States, including Germany, Spain and Switzerland consider the elimination of violence against women, including in conflict and post-conflict situations, as one of their main priorities in their policies on international development cooperation and support several programmes to this end, covering awareness-raising, research and studies, training and the development of laws and policies.

25. Wide-ranging institutional mechanisms, including working groups, were established in order to coordinate the implementation of national action plans and policies given the multiplicity of responses required, to tackle violence against women in general (Cyprus, Finland and Latvia), or a particular form of violence, such as domestic violence (Slovenia). States took additional measures to enhance the overall collaboration and coordination among different actors, including civil society organizations, such as cooperation agreements between different governmental authorities and the establishment of national working groups and intersectional committees (Albania, Argentina, Cameroon, Congo, Egypt, Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Paraguay, Singapore, Spain and Ukraine).

26. United Nations entities, including OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC and UN-Women, supported the development of national action plans and policies to address violence against women as well as the establishment of coordination mechanisms. In order to better inform national strategies and policies at the regional level, United Nations entities developed joint studies with specific evidence-based recommendations, as for example, in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDP and UN-Women), and in the Arab region (ESCWA and UN-Women).

27. Despite efforts to enhance implementation of plans and policies, several States identified the lack of adequate resources and limited coordination and capacity of

the authorities as constraints for effective implementation. Human rights treaty bodies have also shared similar concerns and stressed that despite increased efforts there is still high prevalence of violence against women.

C. Prevention measures, including awareness-raising and capacity-building

28. Prevention is increasingly recognized as the only way to eventually eliminate such violence. States identified existing discriminatory societal attitudes and practices as challenges in preventing and addressing such violence (Cameroon) and stressed the need to address its root causes (Estonia). In order to address these challenges, States have stepped up their efforts in increasing public awareness of violence against women, its extent and consequences and in engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including communities, civil society organizations, religious and community leaders, the media, the private sector, youth, men and boys. Given the importance of prevention, Australia established a dedicated foundation to better inform its policies and their implementation in this area. Other States, including, Paraguay and the Philippines, took measures to address women's economic inequality, or, in general, poverty and homelessness (Finland), as means of preventing such violence.

1. Awareness-raising and promoting safety

29. Awareness-raising on the causes and consequences of violence is important, as a component of a holistic strategy to address violence against women. Countries have organized national awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women, often in collaboration with United Nations system agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and in connection with annual commemorations of the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-based Violence and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (Albania, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Congo, Greece, Mexico, Togo, and Ukraine). Other awareness-raising initiatives included community mobilization, conferences and debates, often aimed at reaching particular groups of women, such as elderly women and women with disabilities, and addressing particular forms of violence (Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Finland, Lithuania, Mauritius and Slovenia). A wide range of material, television/radio spots and social media have been increasingly utilized in awareness-raising programmes.

30. In order to sensitize staff and officials and strengthen their capacity to address violence against women, States organized training programmes, conferences and seminars, as well as e-learning courses, including on international standards, gender equality and violence against women. Such initiatives targeted governmental officials, traditional and religious leaders, parliamentarians, NGOs, the media and young people (Azerbaijan, Finland and Mauritius).

31. During the reporting period, the United Nations carried out awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives on ending violence against women at the global, regional and national levels. These initiatives included campaigns, conferences, seminars and training programmes, and targeted multiple stakeholders. Many of these awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives were organized in particular under the umbrella of the Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women". The UN-Women social mobilization and advocacy platform "Say NO — UNiTE to End

Violence against Women" used social media extensively to raise awareness and strengthen partnerships with more than 900 civil society organizations.

32. In order to promote safe environments for women and girls, including in public spaces, UNICEF and UN-Women, including through the global Safe Cities initiative, carried out studies, engaged community leaders and local authorities, and supported programmes to improve urban planning and safety. Women often face safety challenges during the collection of energy sources for the household in remote areas. In order to address this challenge, UNIDO collaborates with Governments to ensure the access of women to these sources in the safest locations.

2. Educational system and working with the media

33. The educational system can contribute towards changing sociocultural attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate violence against women at early stages of children's lives, and promote an environment free from violence and conducing for equality between girls and boys. At the same time, women and girls often face violence within educational institutions. In several countries, specialized training for teachers and general awareness-raising has been provided to sensitize teachers, students and their parents on violence against women and girls, respectful relationships, gender equality and human rights (Albania, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Cyprus, Estonia, Slovenia, Togo and Paraguay). Other efforts aimed at eliminating harmful gender stereotypes, including through the development or revision of school curricula (Albania, Congo, Paraguay), and strengthening responses to violence within educational institutions, including bullying (Finland).

34. United Nations entities, such as ILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women, also supported national efforts to raise awareness of violence against women and gender equality among students, teachers and parents, provided specialized training to teachers and assisted national efforts in revising school curricula. At the global level, UN-Women, in partnership with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, has developed a non-formal curriculum on ending violence against women and girls, aimed at raising awareness of such violence and its root causes as well as of available services for victims and survivors. In order to strengthen coordination among different stakeholders in their efforts to address school-related gender-based violence, UNESCO, in collaboration with the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative and the Government of France, organized international consultations that resulted in a global mapping of interventions and specific recommendations for collaboration (Paris, April 2014).

35. States highlighted the important role the media can play in raising awareness (Albania) and changing gender discriminatory stereotypes (Paraguay). In order to strengthen this role, States adopted or revised laws to ensure reporting in a gender-sensitive manner (Argentina), or compliance of advertising and the media with human rights standards (Albania and Republic of Moldova). Additional efforts to enhance gender-sensitive reporting by the media, included the establishment of observatories to monitor such reporting (Argentina and Paraguay), and provision of training to journalists (Albania), also supported by UNESCO in some countries.

3. Engaging men and boys

36. Men and boys can play a positive role in challenging gender stereotypes and shaping respectful, gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours. The need to engage men and boys is also confirmed by the findings of recent research, conducted in the Asia-Pacific region by the United Nations inter agency regional programme Partners for Prevention, supported by UNDP, UNFPA, United Nations Volunteers and UN-Women. The findings demonstrate that the perpetration of sexual violence by men against women is often based on their perception of the inferiority of women and a sense of sexual entitlement, as well as the exertion of power over women, while men with more gender-equitable attitudes are less likely to perpetrate sexual violence. States have increased their efforts in engaging men and boys, including through awareness-raising campaigns (Argentina and Paraguay), supporting men's organizations (Philippines), and developing special policies aimed at reaching men and boys (Albania), or including specific measures in their national policies on violence against women (Estonia).

37. United Nations entities, including UNFPA and UN-Women, continued to engage men and boys by involving youth, parliamentarians and sports federations, and conducting awareness-raising campaigns and initiatives. In order to strengthen knowledge on the causes of violence against women, a study examined the association between harmful masculinities and sexual harassment in workplaces (ILO).

4. Programmes for perpetrators

38. In addition to ending impunity for acts of violence against women by punishing perpetrators, a number of States have in place intervention programmes and specialized centres for perpetrators of violence against women in order to change behaviour and prevent further acts of violence (Argentina, Australia, Finland, Latvia, Lebanon, Republic of Moldova and Singapore).

39. Apart from supporting prevention interventions in different countries, the United Nations system intensified its efforts to strengthen knowledge on effective prevention strategies. For example, OHCHR carried out a study on harmful gender stereotypes and how human rights mechanisms address them. In addition, in order to inform the deliberations of the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-seventh session, ESCAP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women and the World Health Organization organized an expert group meeting on the prevention of violence against women and girls (Bangkok, September 2012), during which the experts stressed the need to address the root causes of such violence and identified gaps, challenges and good practices towards this end.

40. Covering the overall range of measures undertaken in preventing violence against women, limited information was provided concerning their sustainability and impact, while human rights treaty bodies continued to express their concerns about the lack of a holistic approach to prevention.

D. Protection, support and services for victims and survivors

41. Victims and survivors require timely access to quality, integrated and coordinated services that respond to injuries, and other health and reproductive

concerns, protect them from further violence, provide them with support, including legal advice, counselling and access to safe accommodation, and address long-term needs, such as finding accommodation and employment.

1. Services and referral mechanisms

42. Support services are increasingly, yet not universally, available. Already existing health services may play an important role in detecting cases of violence against women and girls and providing support and referrals. Such services were provided in Finland and Lithuania, where health professionals also examine women for cases of violence during prenatal, maternity and child health examinations.

43. A promising practice is the provision of services in an integrated and coordinated manner. Services were provided in such manner in some States (Albania, Argentina, Cameroon, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Moldova and Singapore), often tailored to the needs of particular groups of women, such as immigrant women (Finland) or women with disabilities (Spain). Recognizing that civil society organizations, in particular women's NGOs, have significant experience in the provision of services, a number of States have supported their work (Albania, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Finland, Slovenia and Spain), while their role in this area was particularly highlighted in studies conducted by United Nations entities, for example, in the Arab region (ESCWA).

44. In order to achieve better support of victims, several States established referral mechanisms that link relevant sectors (Albania, Argentina and Republic of Moldova), as well as systems to assess the risk women subjected to violence may encounter (Australia, Cyprus, Finland, Japan and Spain). Other developments in service provision include psychological, social and financial assistance (Albania, Estonia, Greece, Lebanon and Qatar); long-term housing (Albania); income-generating activities (Paraguay); and long-term assistance in finding employment (Argentina, Kyrgyzstan and Spain). It is equally important that survivors are supported in their current employment, as it is the case in the Philippines, where, for example, according to the legislation, they are entitled to take a paid leave of absence up to 10 days in addition to other paid leave.

45. Access to such services is often impeded by lack of information about survivors' rights and the available services. In order to address this, States increased awareness-raising about the services availability, also in rural areas, and for particular groups of women such as elderly and migrant women and women with disabilities (Argentina, Finland and Germany). In order to improve the quality of services provided, some States carried out their evaluation (Mexico and Togo). A few States intensified efforts to expand services nationwide (Finland), but in most countries they remain limited and are only available in central locations.

46. As a response to the gaps and challenges that limit survivors' access to quality multisectoral services, UN-Women and UNFPA are implementing the Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, aimed at elaborating or adapting already existing global standards for quality service provision. Other United Nations entities, including ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UNRWA, the United Nations Trust Fund and UN-Women supported national efforts in more than 30 countries to establish coordination mechanisms, develop integrated care models and referral mechanisms and improve the access of survivors to services.

2. Shelters and hotlines

47. Shelters, safe houses and safe accommodation in general, are more widely available for victims and survivors of different forms of violence, and their children, as well as for different groups of victims and survivors, such as women with disabilities (Estonia, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritius, Mexico, Paraguay and Singapore). Despite their increasing number, they still remain insufficient to cover the needs of survivors, as stressed by Finland.

48. National hotlines or helplines that provide information, often in several languages, counselling, support and referral services for victims and survivors of violence are in place in a growing number of countries (Australia, Argentina, Cyprus, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Greece, Japan, Latvia and Spain). Their services were monitored and evaluated in Germany.

3. Capacity-building and guidelines for service provision

49. In order to strengthen the capacity of professionals, such as those working in the health and social services sectors, and ensure better quality of services provision, States organized several initiatives, including training and evaluation of its impact (Finland, Mauritius and Spain). In order to ensure more consistent services to victims and survivors, States have developed standard operating procedures, minimum standards of service provision, and issued protocols and regulations (Cyprus, Finland, Paraguay and Spain). Similar training initiatives and development of guidance material or protocols were also carried out by entities of the United Nations, including UNFPA, UNODC and UN-Women, in numerous countries.

50. States identified several challenges in their efforts to provide support services to victims and survivors, including limited coordination, their limited availability and access for survivors, as well as the lack of uniform standards in their provision throughout the country (Albania, Estonia, Germany and Finland). The Special Rapporteur on violence, its causes and consequences expressed serious concerns about the impact of the financial crisis on the core services provision (see A/HRC/26/38), and the human rights treaty bodies reiterated their concerns about lack of adequate and sufficient support services to victims and uneven quality of services provision.

E. Research, data collection and analysis

51. States have undertaken activities to collect data on violence against women through surveys and administrative records and improve knowledge on the magnitude of various forms of violence, its causes and consequences.

1. Data collection through surveys

52. Several States have collected data through dedicated surveys on violence against women, at times with the support of United Nations entities, in relation to the prevalence, types, causes and consequences of such violence (Australia, Cyprus, Estonia, Japan and Paraguay). Some States have collected data on violence against women through crime surveys (Finland). Data collected through surveys indicated that sexual violence against women and girls is often committed by a person the

survivors know, while the majority of them were not aware of the available services (Estonia). At the regional level, the findings of a European Union-wide survey conducted in 28 Member States of the European Union, based on interviews with 42,000 women, reveal that one in three women has experienced some form of physical and/or sexual assault since the age of 15, and that one third of victims of partner violence and one quarter of victims of non-partner violence contacted either the police or support services following the most serious incident of violence.[2]

2. Administrative statistics and enhanced national capacity

53. Administrative data such as the cases reported to police and charges laid, or the actual admissions of victims and survivors of violence to hospitals or shelters, also provide a source of information on the services used and severity of reported cases of violence against women. Several States reported on measures taken to enhance the collection and analysis of administrative data by police, prosecutors, and other relevant authorities (Albania, Argentina, Cyprus, Finland, Japan, Mexico, Paraguay, Philippines, Singapore and Switzerland). Efforts included the development of methodologies for uniform data collection (Philippines).

54. United Nations entities, including ECLAC, UNDP and UN-Women, have supported the collection of statistical information and improvement of methodological tools at the global, regional and national levels, by providing technical assistance; developing guidelines and modules; establishing databases and observatories, and often focusing on particular forms of violence and situations, including humanitarian situations.

3. Studies, research and analysis

55. Studies, research and analysis on violence against women constitute an important knowledge base for policy and programmes development processes. Research and studies covered a range of issues, including the causes of violence (Finland), its particular forms and harmful practices (Switzerland and Togo), often with the objective of informing appropriate responses for victims and survivors (Finland). Other studies covered the impact of children's exposure to violence against their mothers (Cyprus) and the impact of interventions on men's behaviour change (Australia).

56. Several States and United Nations entities carried out an analysis on the economic impact of violence against women, with one estimate suggesting that violence costs the country SwF 164 million up to SwF 287 million per annum (Switzerland), while a study conducted by ECA reveals that 90 per cent of these costs are borne by individuals and communities. Effective methodologies for measuring the socioeconomic impact of violence against women and the cost of intervention are still a developing area, although efforts have been made to advance it, as for example, in South-East Asia, through regional research and the development of a costing methodology (UN-Women). In order to understand better the impact of the financial crisis on overall gender equality and protection and support of women from violence, UNICRI has recently launched relevant research.

57. Entities of the United Nations support enhanced knowledge regarding violence against women through gathering of information, research and studies, often conducted in specific regions such as the Pacific, where UNFPA supported national representative studies on the extent, causes and consequences of such violence, in

eight countries. The UN-Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls is another initiative aimed at strengthening knowledge and providing country-level programming guidance in English, French and Spanish in 11 key areas, including through the recently launched modules on shelters and violence against women in conflict/post-conflict and emergency settings.

58. A number of States emphasized the continuing challenges, including the lack of data on violence against women in general, or particular groups, as well as the lack of uniform data-collection systems (Estonia and Philippines). When administrative data is available, it is often not disaggregated by sex or age (Albania), and does not provide information about the relationship of the victims and survivors and the perpetrators (Estonia). Human rights treaty bodies also expressed their concern about the lack of sex-disaggregated administrative data regarding the types of violence against women and the number of victims.

V. United Nations efforts aimed at achieving greater coordination, collaboration and capacity development to support national efforts

A. Coordination and collaboration

United Nations system-wide initiatives

59. Several key system-wide initiatives have ensured continued priority within the United Nations system on the issue of violence against women and resulted in increased coordination and collaboration among United Nations entities.

UNiTE to End Violence against Women

60. The Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" continued its advocacy efforts at global, regional and national levels and engaged multiple stakeholders, including high-level officials, also through the Secretary-General's Network of Men Leaders. Particular emphasis was placed on engaging young people, particularly through the engagement of the UNiTE Global Youth Network. In support of its social mobilization efforts, the campaign declared the 25th of each month as Orange Day, a day to take action against violence against women and girls.

United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

61. To date, the Trust Fund has awarded $95 million to 368 initiatives in 132 countries and territories, and by the end of 2013 it was supporting 78 active initiatives in 71 countries and territories — including 11 United Nations country teams — with grants totalling $56.8 million. Although 12 States contributed a total of $9.6 million to support the Trust Fund's efforts in 2013, the global demand for resources continues to greatly exceed the available funds. The Fund currently provides 84 grants in 73 countries for a total of $58 million, and in 2013, its programmes reached more than 3 million women, men, girls and boys around the world, including more than 30,000 survivors of violence. Given the promising results of community-based approaches and the central role of social mobilization to enact change, the Trust Fund's 2014 call for proposals focused on grass-roots

women's groups and youth-led organizations. Programmes that engage groups facing discrimination and exclusion, such as internally displaced people; refugees; conflict-affected women and girls; and women with disabilities will receive special consideration.

United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict

62. The initiative, comprised of 13 United Nations entities, strengthened its responses to conflict-related sexual violence, through intensified advocacy at the global level, the deployment of specialized advisers and technical support in more than 10 countries, and the development of policy and guidance notes on reparations and the provision of services to survivors. Measures were also taken in more than 20 countries to strengthen policy development and coordination among different actors, as well as training and measurement of such violence. The results of an independent evaluation indicate that the initiative is an effective mechanism for advocacy and coordination in addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

Coordination and collaboration at international and national levels

63. In preparations for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women on eliminating and preventing violence against women and girls, the United Nations system collaborated closely within the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality in order to identify common priorities and actions. During the session of the Commission, the heads of 11 United Nations entities, funds and programmes (UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, ILO, UNODC, UNICEF, UNFPA, OHCHR, UNAIDS, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and UN-Women) signed the Joint Statement on Ending Violence against Women and Girls, reaffirming their commitment in preventing and responding to such violence and strengthening their collaboration and coordination to achieve it. Following the adoption of the agreed conclusions by the Commission, an inter-agency note on their implementation was prepared to provide guidance to United Nations gender advisers and country offices.

64. United Nations entities have stepped up their efforts to improve collaboration and coordination also at the national level. For example, United Nations entities joined their efforts under the Sustainable Development Goals Fund, as recently created by the Government of Spain and UNDP on behalf of the United Nations system, to support sustainable development activities, including through activities that address violence against women and girls, in 50 countries.

65. Another example of inter-agency collaboration is the Together for Girls initiative of UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN-Women and WHO, developed in partnership with the Government of the United States of America and private sector actors, which has already conducted surveys on sexual violence in eight countries. The results have contributed to the increase of preventative interventions and have informed national policies and programmes in Kenya, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

B. Improving the effectiveness of the United Nations system to support national efforts

66. In order to better support initiatives that address violence against women at the national level, United Nations entities evaluated their work, strengthened their policy frameworks, and expanded their capacity and knowledge. For example, the strategic plans of both UNDP and UNFPA (2014-2017) include reference and activities to address violence against women. UN-Women was subjected to an external evaluation in order to assess its work in the area of ending violence against women, as supported over the past years, and identify gaps and challenges. The evaluation resulted in six specific recommendations for enhancing the entity's response to violence against women. Following evaluation and recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, several United Nations missions took measures to address violence against women, including in humanitarian settings. Several agencies, including UNFPA and OHCHR, increased their capacity to provide support on addressing violence against women by deploying specialized advisers in several countries. Other United Nations entities, such as FAO, addressed violence against women within their organization by introducing guidelines to address sexual harassment.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

67. **Many actions have been taken by States to prevent and address violence against women. States have strengthened their national legal, policy and institutional frameworks as well as the coordination among a range of different stakeholders. Efforts focused on legal reforms to address violence against women as well as gender inequality. States have increased penalties and introduced new criminal offences, broadened the definitions of violence against women and expanded the scope of support for victims and survivors. Measures were taken to render legal processes more gender-sensitive and strengthen the implementation of legislation through the development of policies and guidelines, and the establishment of specialized police units or courts.**

68. **States continued to complement legal and policy frameworks with initiatives aimed at strengthening data collection and knowledge, capacity-building of officials, and awareness-raising of violence against women, its causes and consequences and available services. Awareness-raising is not always carried out in a systematic manner, however, and it is not extended to remote areas.**

69. **The responses of States have focused mainly on addressing the immediate needs of women in the aftermath of violence through the provision of services, with limited information about long-term support for victims and survivors. Such services still remain insufficient and limited to central locations, while the prevention of violence is still a developing area, and is largely limited to awareness-raising initiatives. Such awareness-raising has been increasingly complemented with educational programmes and mobilization initiatives of multiple stakeholders, such as communities, men and boys and the media. Overall, limited information was provided about the consistency of initiatives,**

the impact of measures and programmes, their monitoring and evaluation and the allocation of adequate resources to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.

70. Despite intensified efforts, the prevalence of violence against women is still universally high, and the implementation of global and national legal and policy frameworks has been slow and uneven. Remaining challenges include limited allocation of resources to implement laws, policies and programmes and insufficient monitoring and evaluation of their impact; the lack of reliable data to monitor progress; the lack of coordination among multiple stakeholders; underreporting of incidents and high attrition rates; as well as discriminatory attitudes of officials handling cases of victims and survivors and insufficient enforcement of legislation.

Recommendations

71. States should adopt a comprehensive, coordinated, systematic approach to addressing violence against women. This approach should be based on human rights, the safety of victims and survivors and the involvement of multiple stakeholders, in particular women's and survivors' organizations, at all levels. The needs of particular groups of women, who face multiple forms of discrimination, should be taken into account.

72. States should continue to implement the agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-seventh session (see E/2013/27-E/CN.6/2013/11, chap. I, sect. A) as a comprehensive blueprint in the areas of laws and policies, services and responses and to address the root causes of such violence and strengthen the evidence base. Strong political commitment at the national level to ensure the implementation of laws, policies and programmes, through the allocation of sufficient resources and accountability mechanisms, as well as monitoring and impact evaluation, is critical.

73. States should continue to adopt and implement comprehensive legal and policy frameworks addressing violence against women and complement them with awareness-raising of victims' and survivors' rights and remedies. States should ensure that accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure the prosecution of perpetrators and that victims and survivors are supported throughout the legal proceedings.

74. Legal, policy frameworks and programmes should address existing gender inequalities, including the economic inequality of women. Provisions should be amended in other areas of laws and policies to enable women to leave violent and abusive relationships.

75. Violence against women should be addressed in laws, policies and programmes addressing broader issues, related to gender equality, public health, education, employment, the eradication of poverty, development and security. States should continue to consider the linkages between gender equality, women's empowerment and violence against women also in future development frameworks.

76. States should enhance their efforts in preventing violence against women by addressing its root causes, as the only way to eliminate such violence. States should ensure that a comprehensive approach to the prevention of violence against women is adopted and resources are increased to monitor and evaluate the impact of such initiatives, including in middle- and low-income countries. Prevention strategies and programmes should be based on research and evidence, while innovative and promising practices should be implemented to generate further evidence.

77. States should ensure that public spaces, the workplace, communities and schools are safe for women and girls. Measures should be adopted to challenge gender stereotypes and social norms that perpetuate violence against women, particularly by promoting equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women in child-rearing and parenting, domestic work and caregiving. States should also ensure early interventions with families and children exposed to or at risk of violence, including through counselling and building the skills needed for respectful relationships.

78. Awareness-raising campaigns should be systematic and extended throughout all areas of the country, tailored for both the general public and particular groups of women. Such awareness-raising is most effective when it is complemented with other initiatives, including community mobilization, educational programmes, policies and curricula that condemn violence and promote gender equality.

79. States should ensure that all victims and survivors of violence and their children have access to quality multisectoral services, including medical treatment, social, psychological, legal assistance and safe accommodation. States should intensify their efforts in providing long-term support, including assistance in finding accommodation and employment. Information about the availability of existing services should be broadly disseminated, including in remote areas, to improve access also for particular groups of women. Such services should be provided in an integrated and coordinated manner and address the needs of particular groups of women.

80. Quality, comprehensive services should be extended throughout the country and be adequately resourced. Coordination among different sectors needs to be further strengthened and referral mechanisms should be reinforced. States should ensure that the work of civil society actors, including women's organizations, in supporting victims and survivors is strengthened.

81. States should ensure the effective implementation of laws, policies and programmes, particularly through the allocation of adequate resources, the systematic training of relevant personnel and the development of specific guidelines. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of laws, policies and programmes should be strengthened to ensure that any identified good practices can be scaled up.

82. States should ensure the systematic and coordinated collection of data on the prevalence, causes and consequences of violence against women, its analysis and dissemination, and improve the quality and comprehensiveness of its administrative data collected by the relevant services. States should ensure the adoption of the nine core indicators for surveys on violence against women, as

endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission, and their proper application at the national level. The development of uniform standards of data collection and capacity-building of statisticians and others to collect data in a gender-sensitive manner are critical. States should use available data to monitor progress, inform legal and policy reforms as well as the provision of effective services.